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Inside!**

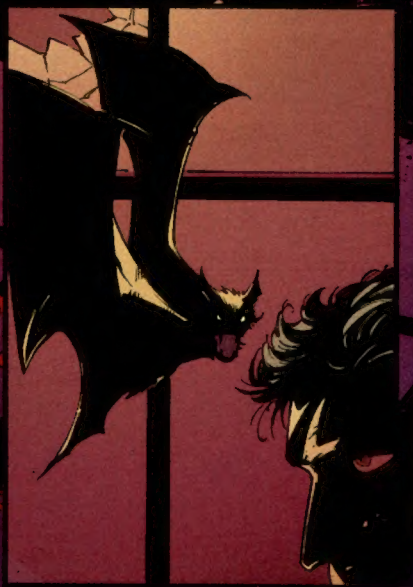
"SOME ANCIENTS BELIEVED THAT THE MOMENT OF DEATH BROUGHT WITH IT *VISIONS*."

"NOT JUST VISIONS OF ONE'S PAST, OR OF THINGS KNOWN TO THE DYING..."

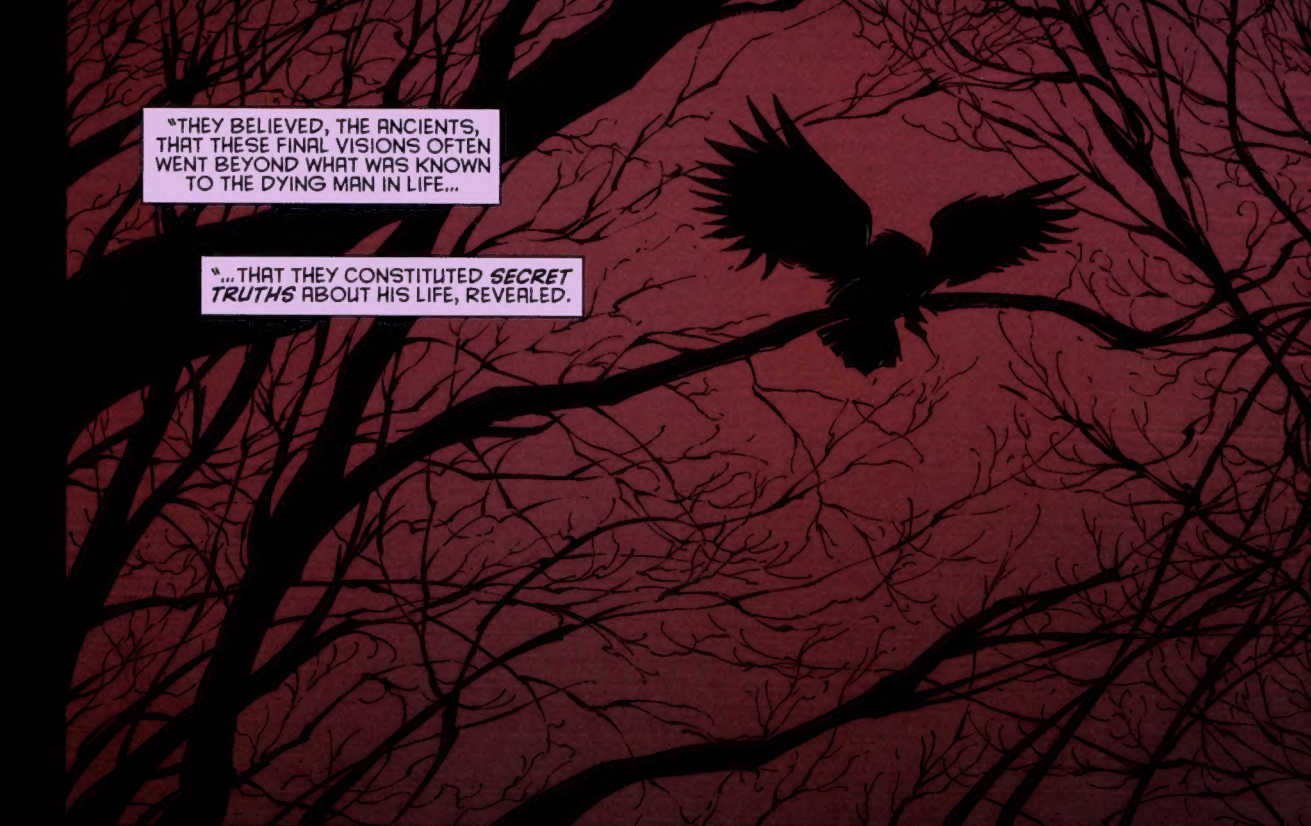
"...BUT VISIONS OF ONE'S SELF AS ONE TRULY EXISTED IN LIFE..."

YES...

...YES.
FATHER,
I SHALL
BECOME A
BAT.





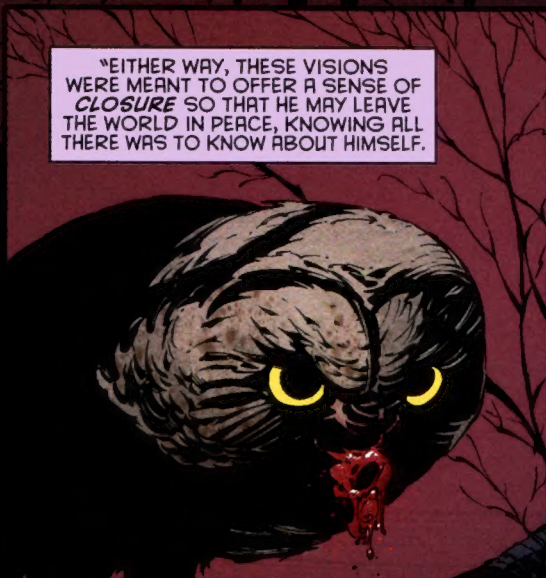


"THEY BELIEVED, THE ANCIENTS,
THAT THESE FINAL VISIONS OFTEN
WENT BEYOND WHAT WAS KNOWN
TO THE DYING MAN IN LIFE...

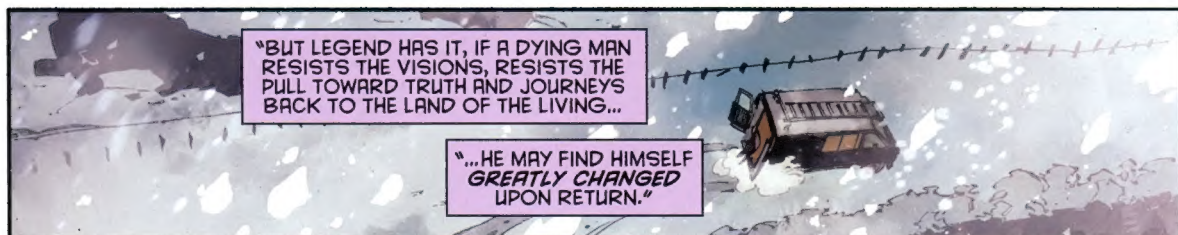
"...THAT THEY CONSTITUTED *SECRET
TRUTHS* ABOUT HIS LIFE, REVEALED.



"EITHER WAY, THESE VISIONS
WERE MEANT TO OFFER A SENSE OF
CLOSURE SO THAT HE MAY LEAVE
THE WORLD IN PEACE, KNOWING ALL
THERE WAS TO KNOW ABOUT HIMSELF.







"AND YOU--YOU WHO
STAND BEFORE US NOW--
WILL CERTAINLY FIND
YOURSELF CHANGED..."

"...WHEN YOU *OPEN*
YOUR EYES."

"WHICH YOU
WILL DO NOW..."

...YES, OPEN
THOSE EYES FOR US.
OPEN YOUR EYES FOR
YOUR COURT!

YOU HAVE
TRAVELED SO FAR,
FROM THE BANKS OF THE
RIVER LETHE, THE RIVER
OF MINDLESSNESS, WHERE
THE SHADES WALK, BACK
TO THIS WORLD, TO
YOUR CITY.

GOTHAM.

YES, LOOK...
LOOK AT YOUR
BODY. IT HAS BEEN
RESTORED, AND MADE
STRONGER THAN
BEFORE. *MUCH*
STRONGER.

YOU DRANK
FROM THE CUP
OF IMMORTALITY,
AND YOU CANNOT
BE KILLED. YOUR
WOUNDS IN BATTLE
WILL HEAL.

YOU
ARE FASTER,
STRONGER
THAN EVER.

AND *WE* ARE
STRONGER, TOO.
YOUR COURT. WE HAVE
BEEN GATHERING OUR
RESOURCES, OUR POWER,
AND WAITING AS THE
GREAT OWL WAITS--
IN PLAIN SIGHT.

UNTIL
NOW...

...FOR NOW IT
IS TIME FOR US TO
STRIKE...TO *RECLAIM*
THIS CITY...

"...AND RIP OUT
THE *HEART* OF
OUR ENEMY."

HALT!

NO
TRESPASSING

IDENTIFY
YOURSELF!

IT'S...
ME.

MASTER
BRUCE!

MY
GOD...

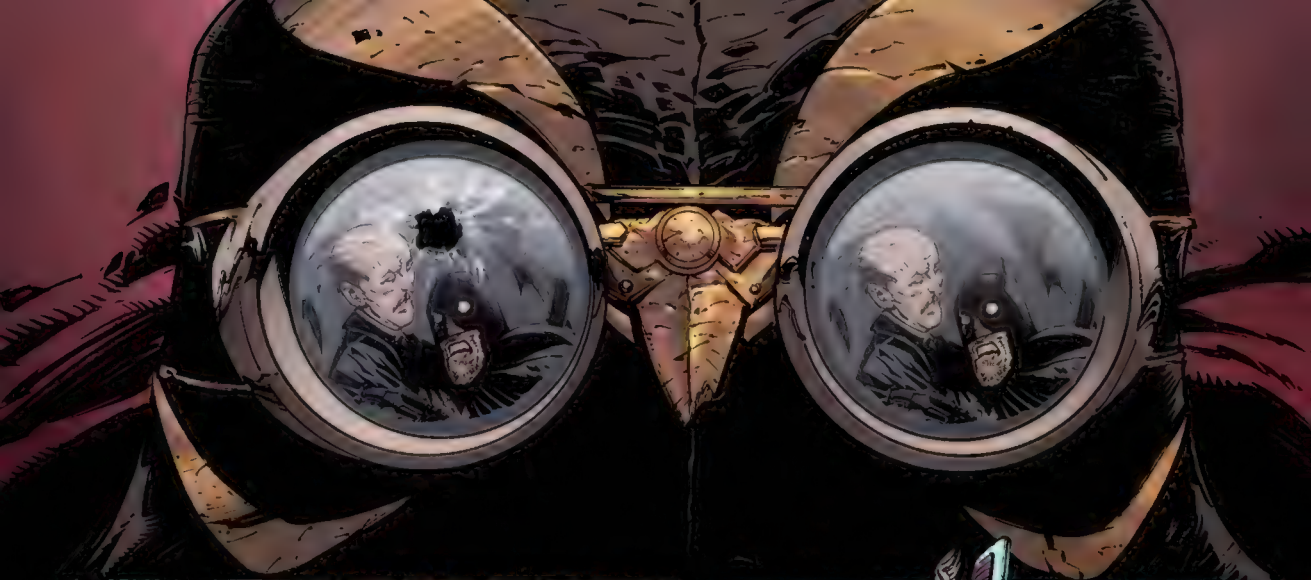
...WHEN I SAW THE HOLE
IN THE ICE, I CONCLUDED
THAT YOU'D CLIMBED
OUT OF THE HARBOR
YOURSELF.

BUT
WHEN YOU
NEVER APPEARED,
I FEARED ONE OF
YOUR ENEMIES
HAD REMOVED
YOU AND--

IT WAS...
SOMEONE
ELSE.

PASSWORD:
"FAIRBANKS"

NO...



LOOK UPON
HIS IMAGE.

LIKE
YOU, HE HAS JUST NOW
JOURNEYED UP FROM THE
UNDERWORLD.

BUT WHILE
YOU HAVE RETURNED
STRONGER, MORE
POWERFUL, HE HAS
RETURNED *BROKEN*
AND *WEAK.*



WE HAVE
MOVED YOUR
ARMOR HERE,
YOUR ARMS.

WE ASK
YOU NOW TO
LET US ARM YOU,
ARM YOU FOR
BATTLE.

FOR
TONIGHT,
WE WILL
STRIKE
DOWN OUR
ENEMY.



NOT JUST
STRIKE HIM DOWN,
BUT TEAR HIM
APART.

LIB
FROM
LIB.



AND EAT HIS
BONES.





BRUCEP



I ASKED ALFRED--

TO TELL ME YOU NEEDED PRIVACY, I KNOW, BUT I WANTED TO COME DOWN AND SEE YOU.



GEEZ, BRUCE. WHAT DID THEY...DO TO YOU?

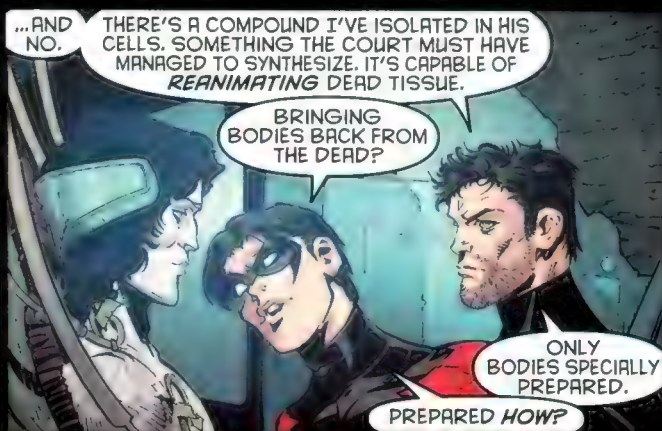


THE MAN ON THE TABLE IS *THE TALON*.

AN ASSASSIN FOR THE COURT OF OWLS.

IS HE... DEAD?

YES...



...AND NO.

THERE'S A COMPOUND I'VE ISOLATED IN HIS CELLS. SOMETHING THE COURT MUST HAVE MANAGED TO SYNTHESIZE. IT'S CAPABLE OF *REANIMATING* DEAD TISSUE.

BRINGING BODIES BACK FROM THE DEAD?

ONLY BODIES SPECIALLY PREPARED.

PREPARED *HOW*?



THE COURT HAS AN AFFINITY FOR CLASSICAL ANTIQUITY. IN ANCIENT GREECE, THERE WAS A TRADITION OF PLACING *COINS* BENEATH THE CORPSE'S TONGUE BEFORE BURIAL. SUPPOSEDLY TO PAY FOR PASSAGE INTO HADES.

THE RICH SOMETIMES HAD THEIR COINS MADE FROM A METAL CALLED *ELECTRUM*. A HIGHLY CONDUCTIVE ALLOY OF SILVER AND COPPER.



IN THIS MAN'S BODY, I FOUND A SIGNIFICANT AMOUNT OF ELECTRUM.

NOT JUST IN HIS BLOOD, BUT IN HIS CELLS. THE ALLOY SEEPED DOWN OVER YEARS AND YEARS, FROM A DEPOSIT EMBEDDED IN HIS *TOOTH*. IN THE SHAPE OF A *TINY OWL*.


LIKE THE JOHN DOE HE KILLED--HE CARRIED HIS FERRYMAN'S COIN WITH HIM ALL THE TIME, FOR YEARS.



BY THE TIME HE WAS RETIRED HE WAS A *WALKING CONDUCTOR*, WAITING FOR A SPARK. AND FROM A CHEMIST'S STANDPOINT, THAT'S ALL THIS COMPOUND IS.




A SPARK TO LIGHT UP THE WIRE.



SO THEY USED
THE COMPOUND TO BRING
HIM BACK FROM THE DEAD
TO KILL FOR THEM.

AND HIS FIRST TARGET
WAS HIS OLD TRAINER, THE
JOHN DOE. AFTER ALL, WHO NEEDS
THE COACH ANYMORE WHEN
YOU CAN REANIMATE YOUR
STAR ATHLETE?


AND
HIS HEALING
FACTOR?



ONCE THE COMPOUND
IS BONDED WITH THE
CELLS, THEY'RE CAPABLE
OF REACTIVATING
AND HEALING OVER
AND OVER.

WHICH IS WHY HE
WAS ABLE TO WALK AWAY
FROM THE FALL OFF
WAYNE TOWER.

AND WHY
HE'S TECHNICALLY
STILL ALIVE RIGHT
NOW. SO HOW
DO YOU TAKE
HIM DOWN?



THE *COLD*.
THE COMPOUND TURNS
THE BODY INTO A KIND OF
HEAT-POWERED FACTORY FOR
CELL REGROWTH.

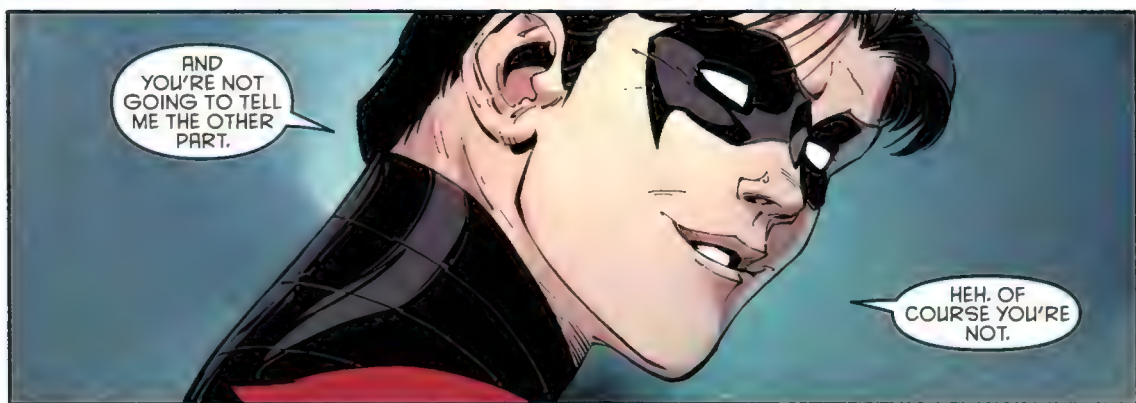
THE WAY TO SHUT
IT DOWN IS TO LOWER
THE HOST'S CORE BODY
TEMPERATURE. PUT HIM BACK
ON ICE. I'M RUNNING
FREEZING SOLUTION
INTO HIM NOW.

DO
YOU HAVE A
NAME FOR
HIM YET?

YES.
HIS NAME IS COBB.
WILLIAM COBB.



AND HE'S YOUR
GREAT-GRANDFATHER.





YOU KNOW, BRUCE, I GET THAT YOU THINK YOU'RE **PROTECTING** ME BY KEEPING YOUR SECRETS.



OR RATHER, I GET THAT YOU *WANT* TO THINK THAT'S WHY YOU KEEP SECRETS LIKE THIS.

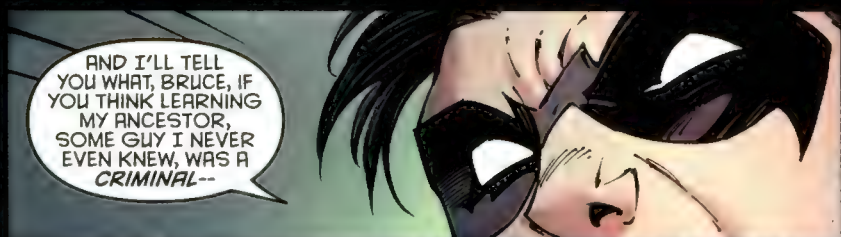
BUT SINCE WE'RE BEING SO HONEST AND UP FRONT--RIGHT? LET'S JUST ADMIT THAT **BOTH** OF US KNOW THE PERSON YOU'RE REALLY PROTECTING IS *YOURSELF*.



FROM NEEDING TO HAVE A DAMN **HUMAN EMOTION!**



BUT YOU HAVE NO IDEA WHAT I'VE BEEN THROUGH THESE LAST FEW WEEKS! **NO IDEA!** THE THINGS I'VE HAD TO **DEAL** WITH!



AND I'LL TELL YOU WHAT, BRUCE, IF YOU THINK LEARNING MY ANCESTOR, SOME GUY I NEVER EVEN KNEW, WAS A **CRIMINAL**--

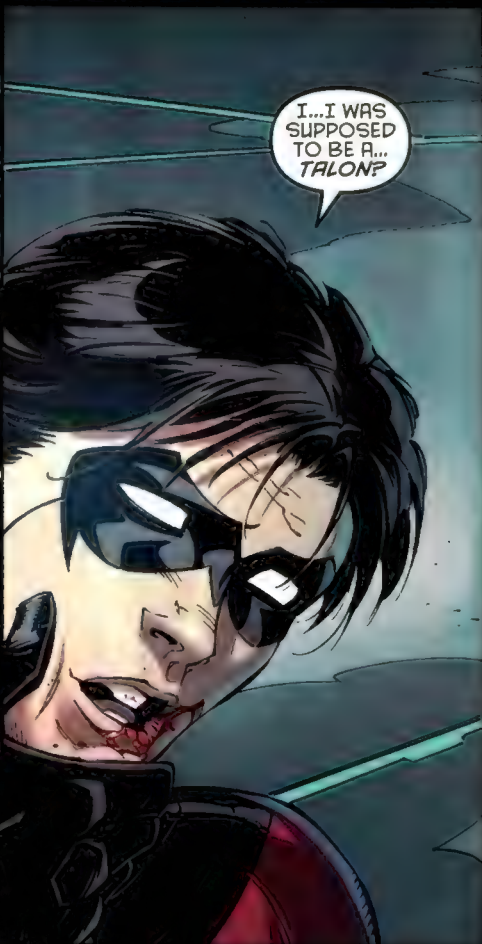


--IF YOU THINK THAT'S GOING TO **FAZE** ME, THEN FRANKLY, YOU DON'T KNOW ME AT--

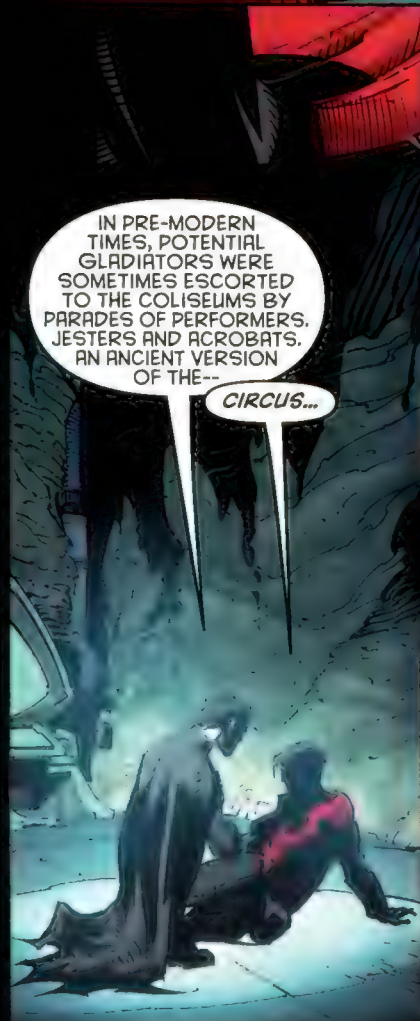




YOU
WERE SUPPOSED
TO BE ONE, TOO,
DICK.



I...I WAS
SUPPOSED
TO BE A...
TALON?



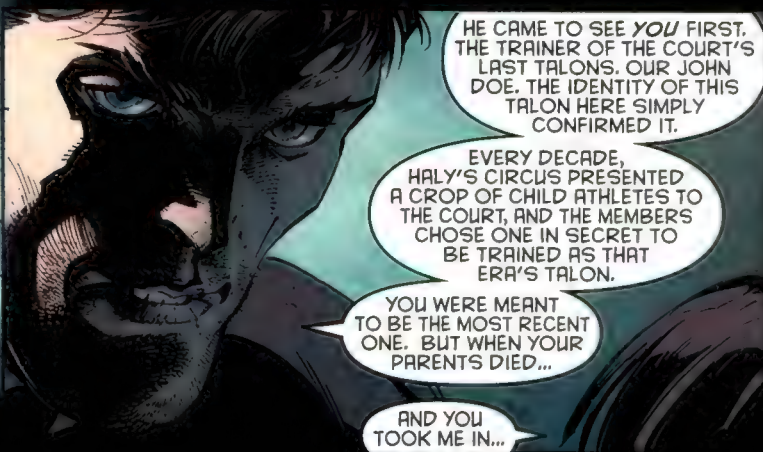
IN PRE-MODERN
TIMES, POTENTIAL
GLADIATORS WERE
SOMETIMES ESCORTED
TO THE COLISEUMS BY
PARADES OF PERFORMERS.
JESTERS AND ACROBATS.
AN ANCIENT VERSION
OF THE--

CIRCUS...



...OF
COURSE...

...BUT
HOW DID YOU
KNOW?



HE CAME TO SEE *YOU* FIRST.
THE TRAINER OF THE COURT'S
LAST TALONS. OUR JOHN
DOE. THE IDENTITY OF THIS
TALON HERE SIMPLY
CONFIRMED IT.

EVERY DECADE,
HALY'S CIRCUS PRESENTED
A CROP OF CHILD ATHLETES TO
THE COURT, AND THE MEMBERS
CHOSE ONE IN SECRET TO
BE TRAINED AS THAT
ERA'S TALON.

YOU WERE MEANT
TO BE THE MOST RECENT
ONE. BUT WHEN YOUR
PARENTS DIED...

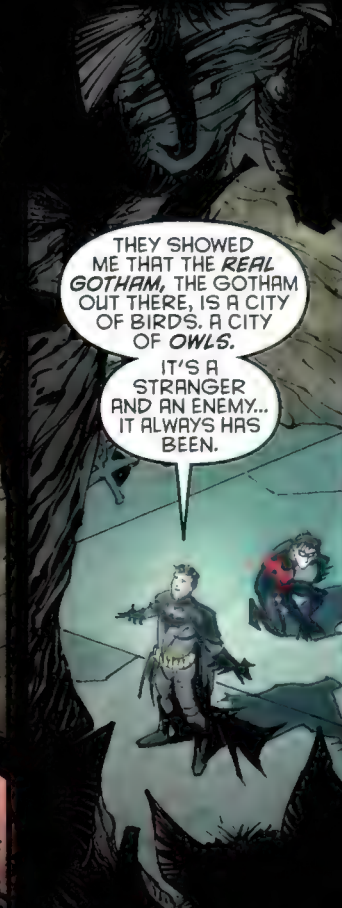
AND YOU
TOOK ME IN...



YOU KNOW, SOME NIGHTS, DICK, ON PATROL, I'VE FELT THE CITY LOOKING AT ME. I ALWAYS THOUGHT IT WAS WATCHING *OVER* ME, THOUGH, LIKE A PARTNER, OR EVEN *FAMILY*...

...YOU ASKED ME BEFORE, WHAT THE COURT DID TO ME.

WHAT THEY DID WAS SHOW ME THE *TRUTH*. THAT THE GOTHAM CITY I THOUGHT I KNEW, *MY CITY*... DOESN'T EXIST.



THEY SHOWED ME THAT THE *REAL GOTHAM*, THE GOTHAM OUT THERE, IS A CITY OF BIRDS. A CITY OF *OWLS*.

IT'S A STRANGER AND AN ENEMY... IT ALWAYS HAS BEEN.

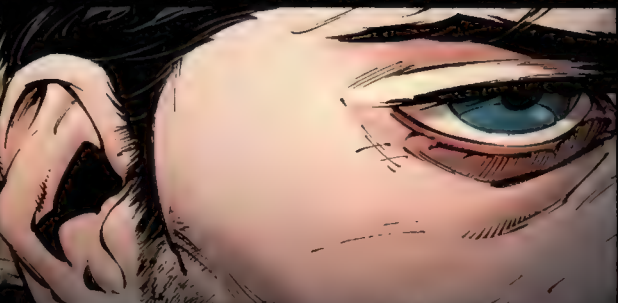
AND I'LL TELL YOU, DICK, IF SOMEONE COULD'VE PROTECTED ME FROM THAT TRUTH, I'D HAVE BEEN GRATEFUL.



WELL, HERE'S SOME TRUTH FOR YOU.

YOU MIGHT BE SEEING SIDES ALREADY, ALL OF US BIRDS ON ONE AND YOU, THE BAT, ON THE OTHER. HELL, YOU'RE PROBABLY THROWING UP WALLS RIGHT AND LEFT.

BUT THE FACT IS, I *DON'T CARE* WHO MY ANCESTOR WAS. OR WHAT THE COURT OF OWLS *WANTED* ME TO BE. I DON'T. WE ARE WHO WE *CHOOSE* TO BE, BRUCE. NOT THE ROLE THE PAST SAYS WE SHOULD PLAY.



THE COURT OF OWLS IS JUST ANOTHER *BAD GUY*, BRUCE. THEY'RE A LITTLE GRAYER AROUND THE TEMPLES IS ALL.



YES, YOU MADE A MISTAKE AND UNDERESTIMATED THEM...



Writer
SCOTT SNYDER

Pencils
GREG CAPULLO

Inks
JONATHAN GLAPION

The **TALONS** **STRIKE!**

Batman Created by
BOB KANE

Colors **FED** Letters **RICHARD STARKINGS &
COMICRAFT'S JIMMY BETANCOURT**

Assistant Editor **KATIE
KUBERT**

Cover by **CAPULLO and FED** Editor **MIKE
MARTS**
Variant Cover by
DUSTIN NGUYEN

NOW
GO! GO
AND TAKE
GOTHAM
CITY!

NEXT: ATTACK ON WAYNE MANOR!



BATMAN

WELCOME TO THE FAMILY!

You may have noticed that since we started The New 52 last September we've broken our titles into different groupings or "families" to help you find your way around our universe. Currently there are seven families including JUSTICE LEAGUE, SUPERMAN, BATMAN, GREEN LANTERN, THE DARK, THE EDGE and YOUNG JUSTICE.

Now, you don't have to read every title in a specific group to understand the story, and the makeup of some families will change as books come and go, but we wanted you the reader to have a way of following your favorite heroes or finding the tone you're looking for in a story. So each month turn to these pages to find out what's happening in each of these families and across the entire DC Universe. We're going to be sharing tons

of cool insight and news on upcoming stories, and we'll have more than a few surprises along the way. And as soon as you're done here, make sure to turn the page to our All Access feature to see what's happening across all of DC Entertainment. You're in

the wonderful world of The New 52, and it's a great time to get to know your family a little better.

In the shocking aftermath of BATMAN #7, by Scott Snyder and Greg Capullo, it's clear that Batman has met his match in the Court of Owls. This May Batman and his associates will

be pushed to their limits in Night of the Owls as the Court attacks Gotham on multiple fronts with deadly precision and force. This is a BIG story and it gets under way next month in BATMAN #8 and NIGHTWING #8, as both issues are special preludes to the main event. BATMAN #8 also features the first chapter of a new backup story focusing on the secret history of The Court of Owls written by Scott Snyder and James Tynion IV with art by Rafael Albuquerque. Next month we'll have all the details on "Night of the Owls," so be sure to check



Nightwing #8

this space.

Speaking of backup stories, DETECTIVE COMICS #8 is the start of a feature by Tony S. Daniel and Szymon Kudranski, marking the introduction of Two-Face to The New 52!



Batman #8

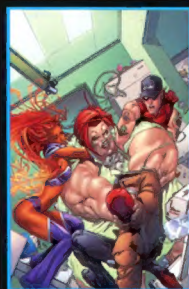
Attention, Batgirl fans! **BATGIRL #8** reveals a secret about Barbara's life that'll leave you kicking yourself for not thinking to ask the question sooner. We did a lot of kicking around here when Gail Simone introduced the idea. Don't miss this issue!



Batgirl #8

COMING NEXT MONTH!

RED HOOD #8 Red Robin guest-stars as we learn where Red Hood will stand during Night of the Owls! By Scott Lobdell & Kenneth Rocafort.



CATWOMAN #8 Judd Winick and Adriana Melo show us that two times the thieves equals WAY more than two times the trouble as Catwoman and Spark take to the rooftops of Gotham.



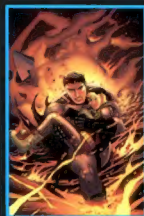
DETECTIVE #8 Scarecrow strikes with an all-new fear gas! By Tony S. Daniel.



BATWOMAN #8 Batwoman faces gnashing teeth, claws and otherworldly powers by J.H. Williams III, W. Haden Blackman & Amy Reeder.



BATMAN: THE DARK KNIGHT #8 Paul Jenkins & Ed Benes send Batman to Wonderland to face Tweedledee and Tweedledum!



BATMAN AND ROBIN #8 Born to Kill reaches its thrilling conclusion by Peter J. Tomasi & Patrick Gleason!



BATWING #8 Batwing confronts Massacre in Gotham City! By Judd Winick & Dustin Nguyen.

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DC COMICS™

M

ore DC NATION!

We're so excited about DC NATION that we can hardly contain ourselves! A couple of weeks ago All Access showed you some images from the short cartoons that take you on a wild tour of the DC Universe every week. That proved to be a pretty popular idea, so we decided to give you some more to check out. DC NATION is an hour-long block of programs including new episodes of Green Lantern: The Animated Series, Young Justice and short stories from all over the DC Universe in different styles of animation from some of the best talent in the entire world. You can see DC NATION every Saturday at 10am on Cartoon Network. I have only one last thing to say: ANIMAL MAN!

- Ian Sattler, DC Entertainment



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THE PROLETARIAT

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